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ABSTRACT

This reader, intended for use in a bilingual education program, tells the story of the Indians' struggle to keep their land along the St. John River during the American War for Independence. Written from the Indian point of view, the text is based largely on the journal of John Allan, a white man living in Nova Scotia, who was sympathetic to the American cause and friendly to the Indians. The narrative tells of the efforts of John Allan to get recognition of the Indians by the American Congress, the differences of opinion among the Indians themselves on the advisability of helping either side, and the battle at Machias in which the Indians forced the British warship "Hope" to leave their territory. The text is in English with the exception of one account of a conversation around a campfire wher the native Indian language is also used. The illustrations are pen and ink maps and drawings by the students at Indian Township School. Also included are excerpts from original historical documents and correspondence related to the subject matter. (AMH)

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For Now, but Not for Long

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The text is based largely on the journal of John Allan and other documents, as given in Frederic Kidder's book, MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EASTERN MAINE AND NOVA SCOTIA DURING THE REVOLUTION (Albany, Joel Munsel, 1867). Other helpful books were John Ahlin's MAINE RUBICON (Calais, Maine, Calais Advertiser Press, 1966) and George Drisko's NARRATIVE OF THE TOWN OF MACHIAS (Machias, The Press of the Republican, 1904).

The story and maps were prepared for the Wabnaki Bilingual Education Program by Robert M. Leavitt. Wayne A. Newell provided the Passamaquoddy language portions of the text. The cover illustration is by Nancy Lewis. Illustrations on pages 30-31 and on page 43 were done by students at the Indian Township School, Martin D. Dana and Henry A. Sockabasin.

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PART ONE: THE INDIANS

Chapter I - Setting Out

In the fall of 1775, we couldn't have known all that would happen to us. We couldn't have known how much would change, how many difficult choices we would have to make.

All summer, we heard rumors of war between America and Britain. The news came from Massachusetts and traveled by the waterways through the land. On the Penobscot River, on the St. Croix, on the St. John and along the coast, we heard about the growing conflict. And we all knew - Penobscots, Passamaquoddies, Maliseets, and Micmacs - that no matter where in this land we lived, the war would touch our lives and change them. But if someone had asked me, "Nicholas, what will happen to your people on the St. John?" I would not have known how to answer.

It was that fall that we first got involved. We were living on the St. John River when we heard that Joseph Orono, chief of the Penobscots, had

returned from Massachusetts. He had gone there during the summer to talk with the American colonists.

"I wonder what he found out about the war?" I asked Ambrose. Ambrose St. Aubin Bear was the chief at our village. We had talked together a lot about what was happening in New England.

"I would like to know," said Ambrose. "Maybe this would be a good time for us to take arms against the British. If we took the chance to fight..."

"Do you mean we should fight in the war?" I asked. It was hard to imagine.

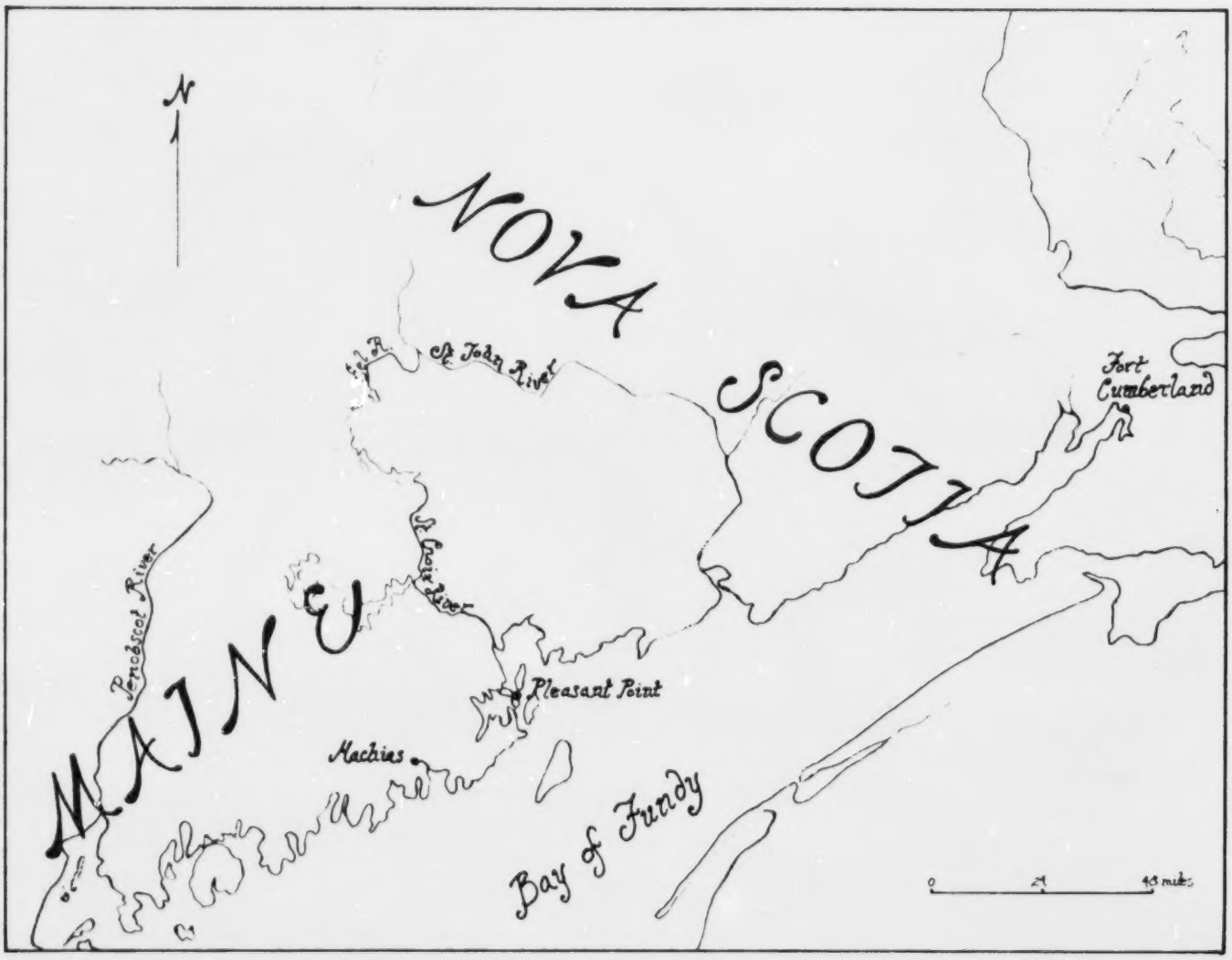
"I don't think it would be so simple as that," Ambrose answered. "It would depend on what the Americans are willing to do, what is best for our people."

"Yes," I said, "we could not fight against Britain without support from the Americans. The British have been our only source of supplies - and ammunition!"

A few days later Pierre Tomah, another Maliseet chief, came up-river with men from his village. He said that they were on their way to the Penobscot to meet with Orono.

"Come with us," he said. "If all of us work together we will be stronger."

We paddled on the old waterways west through the forests. Smooth water and rough carried us on. We didn't know then how much rough water we would see in the years ahead.



Chapter II - Council on the Penobscot

We knew that Orono had gone to Massachusetts for two reasons. In the spring, he had received a letter from the Americans asking for Indian help in the war. In the letter, they promised to supply him and his people with whatever they would need. But Orono had another reason for his trip. He was worried about white settlers moving up the river into Penobscot land. If they were not stopped, the Penobscots would be pushed farther upstream,

and their hunting land would grow smaller and smaller.

"Now I have gone and talked with the Americans," Orono told us. "They will protect our land."

"That is more than the British will do in Nova Scotia," Ambrose replied. "We have been having the same problem on the St. John for many years."

Orono nodded. "And," he said, pointing to a square building by the bank of the river, "we have set up trade with these men from New England. The British gave us no protection from settlers and we could not continue to fight against them. Yet we still had to trade with them for the things we needed."

We all agreed. We had been dealing with the British for fifteen years, ever since they had driven the French out of our land.

"Well," said Orono, "the Americans too have had their problems with the British, and have decided to fight for their freedom. We ought to join them. This is our chance to get a strong hold on the land. Their strength will be ours."

Pierre Tomah, who had come with us, seemed uneasy. "We must do whatever we can to keep our land," he said, "and - I think - to survive at all. You are wise to remember the past, but we must also look to the future."

"What do you mean?" someone asked.

"I am afraid that these Americans may be no different from the

> ...Brothers, the great wickedness of such as should be our friends but are our enemies, we mean the ministry of Great Britain, have laid deep plots to take away our liberty and your liberty, they want to get all our money, make us pay it to them when they never earnt it, to make you and us their servants and let us have nothing to eat, drink or wear but what they say we shall and prevent us from having guns and powder to use and kill our Deer and wolves and other game, or to send to you for you to kill your game with and to get skins and fur to trade with us for what you want. But we hope soon to be able to supply you with both guns and Powder of our own making.
>
> We have petitioned to England for you and us and told them, plainly, we want nothing but our own and dont want to hurt them, but they wont hear us and have sent over great ships and their men with guns to make us give up and kill us, and have killed some of our men, but we have drove them back and beat them and killed a great many of their men. The Englishmen of all the colonies from Novascotia to Georgia have firmly resolved to stand together and oppose them, our liberty and your liberty is the same, we are Brothers and what is for our good is for your good. And we by standing together shall make them wicked men afraid and overcome them and all be free men....
>
> We want to know that you our good Brothers want from us of Clothing or warlike stores, and we will supply you as fast as we can. We will do all for you we can and fight to save you any time and hope none of your men or the Indians in Canada will join with our enemies. You may have a great deal of good influence on them. Our good Brothers, the Indians at Stockbridge, all join with us and some of their men have listed as soldiers and we have given them that listed each one a Blanket and a Ribbon and they will be paid when they are from home in the service and if any of you are willing to list us we will do the same for you....
>
> from a Letter to the Eastern Indians
> In Provincial Congress Watertown May 15, 1775.

British. After all, it is easy to make a treaty. Twelve years ago, the British said that they would protect all the land we held. Yet the very next year Ambrose and I found the white men taking our beaver. Twelve years from now, will the Penobscots still have this land?"

"The Americans," Orono replied, "are fair and generous. What's more, they need our help. That puts us in a position to fight for ourselves as well. If we help them, we will be able to hold onto this land."

"They do need us," said Pierre, "but so do the British. I don't mean we should join with Britain. I think we should wait and see what happens."

"What can be gained by waiting?" Orono asked him.

Pierre answered, "This is a hard land for the white man. In most places he has no roads and very few settlements. We are the only ones who can get around easily, and we travel everywhere. If we are going to help one side, then there will be fighting here. Wherever there is fighting, the white man will move in. Let us not put our land in the hands of either side. No one will be able to do anything here without our help."

"What you say is true," said Orono, "but we have had too many years of British rule. There are men in Massachusetts who are ready to join us now. Together we can drive Britain out. We may never have the chance again."

That evening all of us from the St. John met to decide what we should do. After a long discussion, Pierre and others who had wanted to wait agreed to go along with those who wanted to join the Americans now.

Pierre and Ambrose wrote to the Massachusetts Council pledging our friendship and coöperation against Britain and asking for a priest. They also asked for guns, ammunition, and food, in trade for furs and skins. That way too we would see how serious the Americans were about seeking our help.

But little happened through the winter.

The next summer, Ambrose went with some others to Boston to promise support again, and to request supplies. They said that we and the Micmacs would send men to the American army. In return, Massachusetts

would set up supplies for us in Machias, Maine. They had no authority here on the St. John River.

However, when Ambrose and the others returned from Boston to tell us about the treaty, we were surprised. What good would supplies be to us far away in Machias? We realized too that we could not afford to send our men off to fight in a distant part of the country. Men would be needed at home.

At the Truckhouse, Penobscot Falls, Sept. 12th, 1775.

Capt Thomas Fletcher and Lieut Andrew Gillman Interpreters Present

We Ambroice and Peire Toma the Heads of ye St Johns Tribe and in behalf of said Tribe and the Micamac Tribe.

We salute the Chiefs of the Colony of ye Massachusetts and wish you health, and that God would prosper you in your present war with Great Britain.

We have talked with the Penobscot Tribe and by them we hear you are engaged in a war with Great Britain, and that they are engaged to join with you in opposing you and our Enemies.

We heartily join with our brethren the Penobscot Indians in every thing that they have or shall agree with our Brethren of the Colony of the Massachusetts and are resolved to stand together and oppose the People of Old England that are endeavouring to take yours and our Lands and Libertys from us.

We are brothers of one father and one God made us all, and we will stand by you as long as the Almighty will give us strength, and we hope you will do the same for us.

We have nowhere to look too for assistance but to you and we desire that you would help us to a Priest that he may pray with us to God Almighty.

We have no place to go to but to Penobscot for support and we desire you would provide Amunition Provisions and Goods for us there, and we will come in there, and give you our fur, and skins, and take our support from you in return and will be thankful to you for the Kindness.

Brothers We pray God to Bless you and Prosper you and strengthen and Lengthen this New Chain with us.

PART TWO: THE COLONISTS

Chapter I - John Allan

The Indians were not the only people in Maine and Nova Scotia whose lives were upset by the war. Many white men living in eastern Nova Scotia believed in the American cause. But since the British were in full control of that part of the country, these men had little choice but to remain silent.

One of them was a man named John Allan, who had grown up on a farm near Fort Cumberland. As a young man he went to school in Massachusetts, where he became convinced that the Americans were right in their war against Britain. At home, he spoke out.

In the summer of 1776, British soldiers were ordered to arrest Allan for treason. Traveling by night, he fled to Maine, leaving his wife and children behind.

John Allan did not plan to stay in New England. He wanted to come back to Nova Scotia to free his own part of the country from British rule. Knowing that he would not be able to do this without help, and knowing that the Indians in Nova Scotia would also be glad to see the British go, Allan traveled among the Micmacs before he left, seeking their help.

When he arrived in Maine in August 1776, he found that on their own the Indians had already begun working with the Americans. His own interests, he decided, would best be served by working closely with the different tribes in Maine and Nova Scotia. But he would have to do more than

talk if an attack on Nova Scotia were to be successful. He would have to get supplies and ammunition and recruit soldiers.

With these ideas in mind, Allan left Maine for Boston in the fall. Because of the war, however, supplies were scarce in Massachusetts, and he was forced to travel on to Baltimore to ask help from Congress.

Chapter II - Looking for Help

Just before Christmas 1776, John Allan met with General George Washington at his headquarters on the Delaware River. He told Washington: "I know that the Indians in Nova Scotia and Maine want to help us in this war."

Washington agreed. "When I met with the Indians last year in Massachusetts, I gave them a Chain of Friendship to take with them when they went home. It was accepted and returned. They agreed to help us."

"Yes," Allan said, "they want to hold onto their land, and it will be good for us if they can.

"But they must hunt to live," he went on. "If they go off to fight, they will have nothing to eat. They don't like the British, you know, but we will have to do all we can to keep them on our side. We must supply them - at some place near their villages."

"Yes, yes," said Washington, "and I have ordered a truckhouse to be set up on the St. John River. But now they say that they cannot fight, they need their men at home. I will write to them and tell them, now is the time to honor our friendship. They will feel our strength against them if they do not join us!"

Allan knew that the Indians didn't need to be threatened. The British had not treated them well. They hoped for better from the Americans.

After a bitterly cold journey, Allan arrived in Baltimore on December

Brothers of the St Johns Tribe

It gave me great Pleasure to hear by Major Shaw, that you Kept the chain of Friendship, which I sent to you in February last from Cambridge bright and unbroken.

I am glad to hear that you have made a treaty of peace with your Brothers and neighbors of the Massachusetts Bay, who have agreeable to your desire established a Truck House at St Johns out of which they will furnish you with everything you want and take your Furs in Return.

My good Friend and Brother Govr Pierre Tommar and the Warriors that came with him, shall be taken good care of, and when they want to return home, they and our Brothers of Penobscot shall be furnished with every thing necessary for their journey -

Brothers, I have one thing more to say to you, our enemy, the King of Great Britain, endeavored to stir up all the Indians from Canada to South Carolina against us. But our Brethren of the Six Nations and their allies the Shawnese and Delawares would not listen to their advice, but Kept fast hold of our ancient Covenant Chain. The Cherokees and the Southern Tribes were foolish enough to hearken to them and to take up the hatchet against us, upon which our Warriors went into their Country burnt their Houses destroyed their corn and obliged them to sue for peace and to give Hostages for their future good behavour -

Never let the Kings wicked Counsellers turn your hearts against me and your Brethren of this Country, but bear in mind what I told you last February and what I tell you now -

In token of my Friendship for you I send you this from my Army on the Banks of the Great River Delaware this 24th day of December 1776.

G. Washington.

30, and met with Congress five days later.

"Maine is far away," he told them, "and travel there is difficult. But the area is rich in furs and timber, and we must keep the Bay of Fundy and the St. John River. To do this we need supplies. We need soldiers and guns. The Indians will join us only if we can trade with them for furs and give them the things they want."

Congress made John Allan Superintendent of Eastern Indians. This gave him the power to obtain supplies for trade.

Allan left Baltimore feeling happier. But could he get back to Nova

Scotia in time? On the road, he heard that a small group of soldiers and Indians that attacked Fort Cumberland had failed. He knew that there had been too few men to make an attack. He knew he would have to raise many men if he were to have any success at all in keeping Nova Scotia for the Americans.

Back in Boston, Allan had to spend three long months persuading the Massachusetts Council to furnish supplies and to send men to fight in Maine and western Nova Scotia. Yet although the Council made him a Colonel of Infantry, he could not get as many men as he wanted.

What was more, while he was in Boston, Ambrose Bear came to complain about the high prices charged at the truckhouse and the low prices paid for furs.

Perhaps it would be better, Allan decided, if he worked with the Indians themselves.

It was one evening at the end of May 1777 that John Allan arrived at the Passamaquoddy Indian village at Pleasant Point with three boats and three birch bark canoes. The men in his boats fired seven shots to greet the people at the Point, and they heard shots fired in return.

At sunset, Allan's men brought a cannon ashore and set it off. He spoke with the Passamaquoddies the next day, and accompanied by fifteen canoes he set off for the St. John.

They traveled up the river, followed where it turns west, and then

on to the Indian village at Aukpaque, visiting the few white settlements along the way. At Aukpaque they were greeted by chiefs Pierre Tomah and Ambrose Bear.

PART THREE: ROUGH WATER

Chapter I - Pierre Tomah and Ambrose Bear

As I was walking on the shore of the St. John River one evening in the late spring, I saw many canoes coming upstream to our village. I recognized at once that they had come from Passamaquoddy Bay, and that with them was our friend John Allan. I ran back up the hill and told the men to fire muskets to welcome the canoes. After they had fired, we heard a reply from the boats, and soon all were ashore.

The men and women from the village made a long line up from the river bank. When Pierre and Ambrose had greeted Allan and his men, they walked up the hill passing the line of welcomers, who kept firing their guns until all had gone by.

Indeed, we were glad to see all these men arrive. For the past year we had been having a lot of trouble with the British on the St. John. Maybe now we would be able to drive them out.

Two days after Colonel Allan arrived, we all met at the wikowam of Chief Pierre Tomah, where Ambrose told the chief of his recent trip to Boston and how well he had been received there.

"Brothers, like us the Americans have been ill-treated by the British. Now their rights and their territory are being attacked by British soldiers. If they lose their fight, then we too will lose our rights and our land. For, as you know, the British have been pushing us back for a long time.

"But our brothers the Americans have affirmed their respect for Indian land. When a man has traded unfairly with us, they have set things straight. We have promised to help them in their war against Britain. Our words were spoken in good faith.

"We have not been forced to take arms. Last summer the governor at Boston told us that we could fight at our choice. Now is the time!"

Many of us agreed to join the Americans in their fight.

In the afternoon at Ambrose's wikowam, I was called upon to welcome Allan as our friend and brother and as a member of the Maliseet Tribe, presenting him with a string of wampum.

Pierre Tomah spoke to us next:

"Brothers, I too have been to visit the Americans, in Boston and in Philadelphia. But I did not find them so friendly. In fact, I was treated very rudely, and even threatened by General Washington.

"Yes, I have fought with you against the British. But the Americans will never take the St. John. There are not enough men. We are too far from the big American cities to receive supplies, and too far from the battle-fronts to get soldiers. When I complain to the Americans that they have not sent us what they promised, they try to turn my people against me.

"General Washington will not come to fight with us here. He cannot afford to. I say that we should take no side. That way the white men will not fight here and our land will be left whole. I will welcome all white men as friends."

We understood Pierre Tomah's speech. Some agreed with him. They had been discouraged by the failure of the Americans to send supplies and men. But Ambrose said he believed that the Americans were not always able to stretch themselves way up here. He felt that they would keep trying, and he intended to stand with them.

John Allan wanted to speak to us too, but we told him that only the hosts might speak, so he must invite us to his house for that. He was staying at the priest's house, which was empty, near the chapel.

Again after two days we met and spoke.

Allan greeted us, thanking us for his initiation into the tribe. He told us about the war. At the end he said, "I will use all my influence to make Massachusetts live up to its promises. This land is yours by right, and we shall help you to keep it."

Later, at my wikowam, we signed an agreement of trade and friendship, for which I was glad.

Then we danced and feasted for two days, first for the men and the next day, as is our custom, for the women.

But the consequences of our friendship with our brothers from the States fell upon us sooner than I had expected.

Chapter II - Trouble on the St. John River

The very next morning we heard reports of a British ship, the Vulture, at the mouth of the St. John. We sent off four men to spy. It seemed that someone was spreading a rumor that we Indians were taking up arms again against the British. Their spies were soon seen at the village, and we prepared for a battle if we were attacked.

But the ship left after a brief exchange of shots with Captain West, who was watching the mouth of the river.

By this time, Allan began distributing stores and even promised to provide food for a crippled boy here as long as the Americans stayed. He sent to Machias for more provisions. In order to be at his service, many of our people had stopped hunting when the agreement was made with Allan, although supplies were still short and many families did not have enough.

Upriver, at Madawaska, supplies were also very short, and the Indians, at Allan's invitation, sent men here to work out a trade agreement with the Americans. Also here was Jean Baptiste Neptune, chief of the Passamaquoddies. A copy of the agreement was given to him.

And we held a great song feast for all the visitors. Oragamet Washington, an Indian from Madawaska, sang a moving song. He greeted Allan, then all the chiefs, then he sang again. Another man from Madawaska performed this ceremony next. Then came Pierre Tomah - but he greeted

the Indians from upriver before he greeted Allan. Many others sang after that. Paul Neptune made us all laugh with his song.

It was Ambrose Bear's turn next. He took Allan first by the hand, then the men from Madawaska. But Pierre Tomah he did not greet.

The British soon returned to the St. John with several ships, among them the Vulture and the Rainbow. The Americans were too few to defend the shores and islands. They tried to ambush the British, but they had sent many soldiers upriver on the banks. They surrounded the Americans, who were forced to flee, losing five men.

We spent the next two weeks moving upriver, with only minor skirmishes. But I must tell about one incident that happened during this time.

One morning, Pierre Tomah went aboard one of the British ships after arguing with us. We wanted to pursue some of the British soldiers who had gone up the Oromocto River, but he persuaded us not to. We could not, he said, hope to gain anything by such a move. It would only put us in a position where we would be unable to defend ourselves.

After he returned from the British ship, Pierre told us that they were offering four hundred dollars for Colonel Allan, dead or alive. The British Indian Agent, Mr. Francklin, wanted to see Allan, but only if he were taken prisoner.

Pierre also sent a message to Ambrose, asking that he come speak

with Mr. Francklin. But Ambrose said he would not go.

I heard him speaking with Pierre when he returned.

"Are you going back on our promises to help in the war? We have given our word."

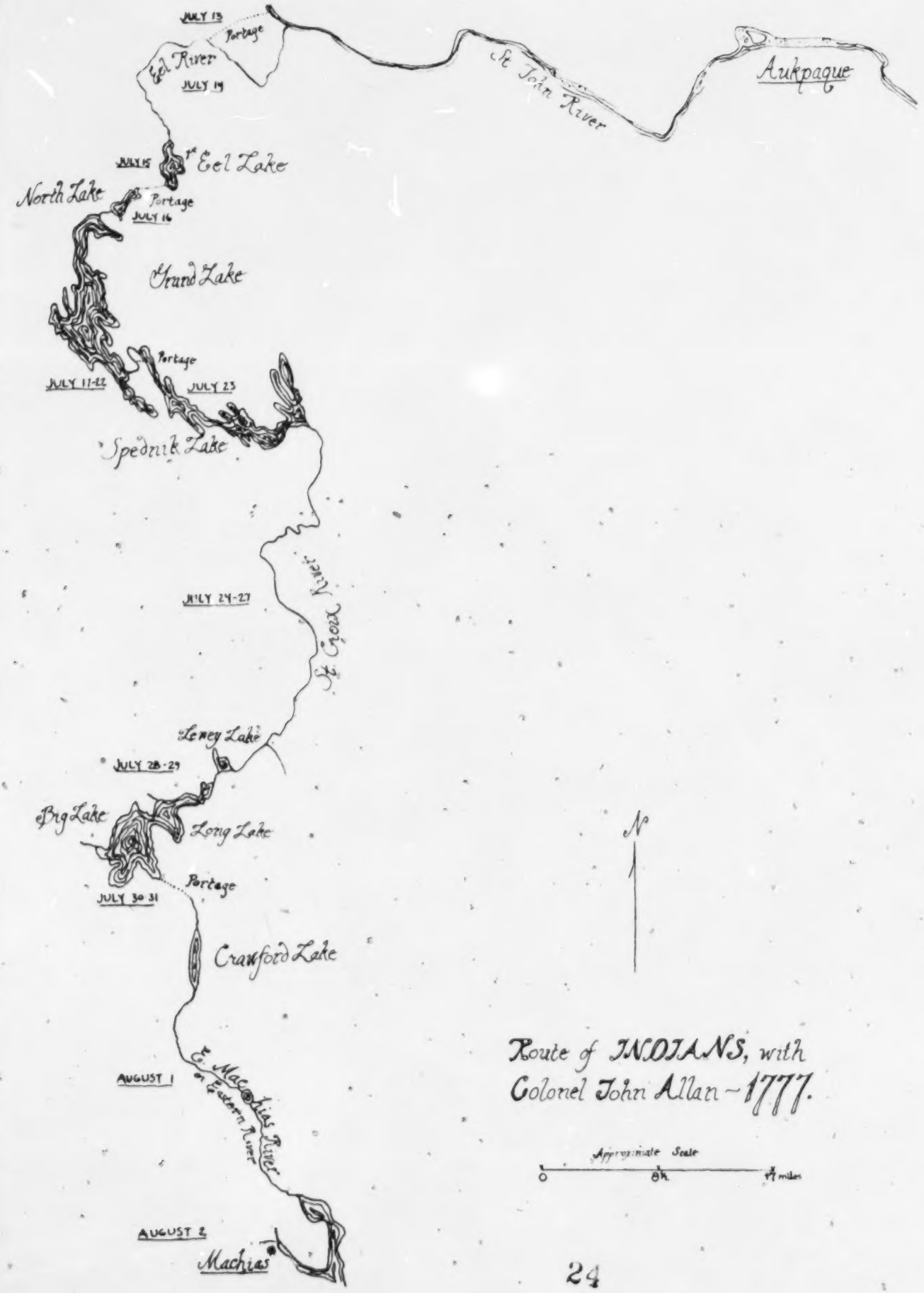
Pierre answered him. "Now don't you see, Ambrose, that the Americans are finished here? Why should we bind ourselves to these men who can promise us nothing. This is our land, not theirs. It is right that we do everything we can to keep it. There will be no Americans here when the war is over."

"But Pierre, we have given our promises. And the Americans can keep the British out of here if we help. After all, it is the British who want to take our land."

"I know that," Pierre replied, "but I tell you, Ambrose, the only way that we shall survive and be able to live here is to take neither side. Look what has happened to the tribes to the south. Let the white men fight. If we join one side, we will lose all."

Still, Ambrose could not join him in his friendship with the British.

When the day came for us to think about leaving the St. John, Pierre Tomah stood by his decision to remain neutral. He tried to arrange a meeting among us, the Americans, and the British. But the Americans took down the British flag he had hoisted at the chapel.


JULY 13
Portage
Eel River
JULY 14
St John River
Aukpaque
JULY 15
1st Eel Lake
North Lake
Portage
JULY 16
Grand Lake
Portage
JULY 11-12
JULY 23
Spednik Lake
St Croix River
JULY 24-27
Leney Lake
JULY 28-29
Big Lake
Long Lake
Portage
JULY 30 31
Crawford Lake
AUGUST 1
E. Machias or Eastern River
AUGUST 2
Machias
N
Route of INDIANS, with Colonel John Allan - 1777.
Approximate Scale
0
8
16 miles

Chapter III - We Leave the St. John River

John Allan came to see Ambrose.

"Ambrose, our supplies have been destroyed and we are outnumbered by men and ships. Can you lead me and my men back to Machias?"

Ambrose looked at him for a long time. Then he said, "I must speak with my people."

Once again we met to decide what course we should take. Ambrose spoke first. "For now the British have pushed the Americans out. Should we now leave the St. John? If we do go, I don't know when we will be able to return to our home."

"Where would we go?" I asked.

"To Machias, with John Allan," he told me. We cannot make a stand here, maybe we can fight with him there."

"But how can we abandon our land here?" asked Pierre. "I will stay."

After much talk, however, the council decided to join Allan for a time. So most of us would leave the St. John.

Our journey was long because we were so many. Five hundred men, women, and children left the St. John in more than 120 canoes. We went by foot and by canoe over portages, rapids, and quiet lakes, through the green summer forest.

I remember coming to the portage at Eel Lake, four miles of hard

walking, where I had passed many times. As we trudged along with the load of canoes and baggage, I looked down at my feet. There, winding across the bare granite rocks, was a shallow groove. I suddenly realized that it had been made by Indian moccasins passing in single file for hundreds of years over the same path. Truly this land is ours.

At the end of this portage was a small pond. We set up our camp there to rest from the long and difficult carry.

In a few days we came to Grand Lake, where we camped for several days. Allan had sent his aide and two of our men on to Machias for news and supplies.

One morning at our camp, as we were cooking and the children were swimming in the lake, we heard a loud crashing in the woods. Suddenly a large bull moose came charging right through the camp, with dogs and hunters at once jumping up to chase him!

But they did not get him, and that night we went hungry.

The next day we took count of our canoes. Many of them had been badly worn carrying the heavy loads on narrow streams. So all of us set out to find birch bark.

The summer, of course, is not the best time to get bark, since it falls apart in layers. But we needed it now to repair our canoes and make some new ones.

We walked quietly through the woods and paddled along the lake shore

and up small streams. There were many large white birches and we did not have to go too far to find enough bark for our needs. This the men carefully stripped from the trees in large sheets, first cutting a line down the trunk, then peeling it around the tree. A few of us lit bark torches and heated the birch bark. This made it easy to roll up lengthwise for carrying.

That night we camped by ourselves and spoke in our own language of the times in which we lived.

"Kpomawsowakonon kilun naka knicannuk toliqsenomoniya oc wapeyicik," one man said. "Our lives and our children's lives are in the hands of the white men."

"Kotama, tokec kisi nutehqoq Ikolisomanok, cu kcikihtakunnuk Malihkinok," said another. "Not so, for if we can help to keep the British out, the Americans will leave us in peace."

"Tokec, katop qenoq sipkiw," someone said. "For now, not for long."

"Wen pal kesicihtaq, cipotuk ote kistewe Ikolisoman," said the first man. "Who knows, it might be that the British will win this war."

But Horatio, a Penobscot man was there. He had been traveling much lately and knew all that was going on on the St. John and to the west. He spoke earnestly to us.

"It is true that this part of the country can no longer be wholly ours; but if we stand together, we will be able to keep much of it. This is a rough and remote land. It is hard for the white man to get around here - he is

so dependent on wheels and horses. He will never settle here in great numbers. Let us stand together and keep our land."

He said that God Himself had given us the right to this land and that no one had the right to take it away without our consent.

"Already," he said, "the Indians in Canada are divided among themselves - some are going with the British, some with the Americans. My people too have divided. But it will do no good to divide ourselves. Remember, this is our land."

So we all went off to sleep, not knowing what the months ahead would bring.

Chapter IV - On the Way to Machias

Next morning, we returned to camp with the birch bark. We spent the rest of the day working on the canoes. There were no provisions left, so we started off the next day across a short portage into Spednik Lake.

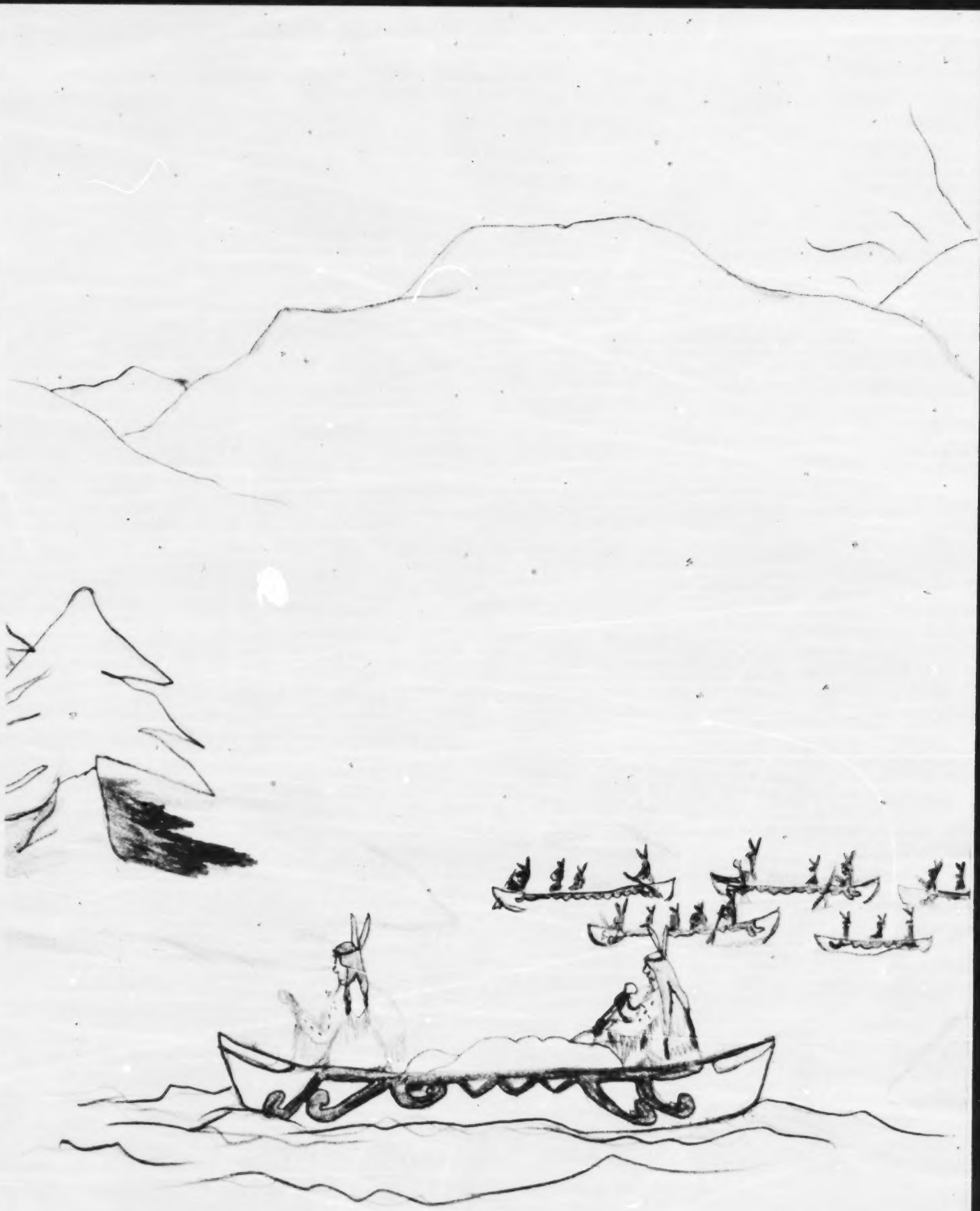
When we had gone about a third of the way down the lake before a fine west wind, we saw old Pierre Joe on the shore. He had killed two moose and wounded a third. This was a good place to camp!

Soon the third moose was found. Ambrose invited Allan and some of his men to feast at his wikowam that night.

Next morning, the wind had turned to the north and we put up the sails on our canoes. Two men and I went ahead....

We sail down the lake. The shores close in on us with their tall dark trees. Then the lake pushes the shores back and cuts into them in long narrow inlets and wide bays. Great white boulders rise above the water. Along the lake shore and on the islands grow tall cedar, spruce, hemlock, and birch; then elm and ash; higher up, pine, hemlock, and larch trees cover the hills and mountains.

The canoes part the water. Below me, I can feel the salmon and the trout, the perch and bass, swimming through the cool dark water. Hundreds of ducks and geese fly off on either side, breaking into the air with shrill cries. And behind the trees, who knows how many moose watch us pass, and back in the dark woods, how many bears and wolves.



I know every stream and shore, but I have come and passed away. This is our land, yet I see no mark of man....

My thoughts were broken by a shout. One of my companions had seen three moose. Quickly we went ashore and started after them. By the time the others had caught up to us we had the fresh meat sizzling over the fire.

We stopped only to eat, and by evening we entered the St. Croix River. It was very rough water for that time of year and the falls were dangerous. The women and children went ashore to walk while we took the canoes down. At the last fall, the water was white from shore to shore, and we had to pick our way among the rocks. Allan's canoe was loaded too heavily in front and it stove in against a rock. But he came through and stopped for repairs.

Along the way we found another moose, killed and dressed, left for us by some others who had gone ahead.

At camp, Ralwate, a Penobscot, came to see Colonel Allan. He wanted to bring some of his tribe to join us. Allan sent a letter to Penobscot, asking them to come to Machias and to spread the news of the British invasion of Maliseet land.

As for us, we all decided to go with Allan to Machias too, and stay near there at least until fall.

After some days we arrived at Big Lake, very large and broad with

many islands. Here we camped for two days in rainy weather.

We were now but a short journey from Machias, down the East Machias River. We had a hard time at first, since the water was low, and there were many rough portages. It was miserable wet weather, the baggage was heavy, the old people and the babies were weary of travel. It took two days for everyone to come through to the river.

After passing through more rough water, in the East Machias River, which tore the canoes, we were glad finally to arrive at Machias two days later. There we found provisions and a place to camp - for how long, we did not know.

PART FOUR: THE BATTLE AT MACHIAS - 1777

Chapter I - Ships up the River

WEDNESDAY, August 13, 1777.

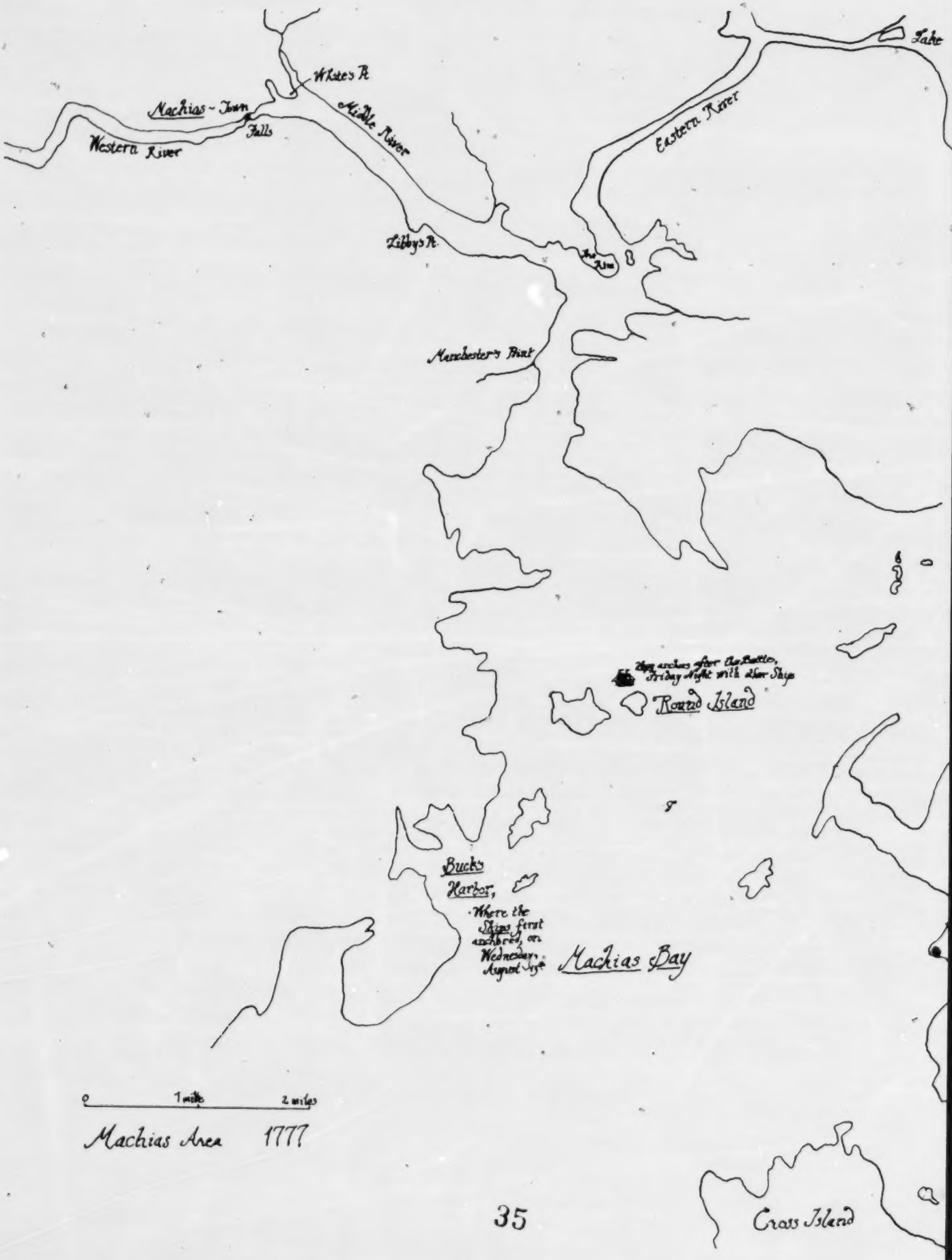
About ten days after we arrived in Machias from our journey through the lakes and streams, the Penobscots came down. They exchanged wampum with us, with the Passamaquoddies, and with the Americans, in token of our lasting friendship.

Suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon, a soldier rushed in to report that several large ships were anchored in Buck's Harbor, below the river. Major Stillman and Captain Smith jumped up and ran at once to their boats to discover who these ships might be. They returned, out of breath, to report that the Vulture, the Mermaid, and the Rainbow, together with the brig Hope and the schooner Blonde Lily - all British vessels- had entered the harbor.

Many of the men were plainly frightened. As for me, I had been looking forward to a battle ever since we were chased from the St. John.

Major Stillman, Captain Smith, and Colonel Foster took boats down the river to the Rim, a point of land near the mouth of the river. The brig Hope was anchored there with eight small boats in tow, each full of British marines from the other ships. The Hope too was filled with soldiers.

Across the river from the Rim, a large log boom was anchored. The American officers thought they might be able to pull it across the river and


Lake
Whites R.
Machias - Town
Falls
Middle River
Western River
Eastern River
Libbys R.
Manchester's Point
Ship anchors after the Battle, Friday night with their Ship
Round Island
Bucks Harbor,
Where the Ships first anchored, on Wednesday, August 13th
Machias Bay
0
1 mile
2 miles
Machias Area 1777
Crass Island

anchor it there to block the ship from coming up into the town. They went ashore, and the British at once started to follow them. But Smith, Stillman and Foster kept up heavy gunfire and prevented the British from landing. They retreated in confusion to the Hope.

That night, Captain Smith came up to the town to get a cannon and swivel from the American ship Marisheete (named for our tribe). Colonel Allan also gave him some cable and an anchor for the boom.

The fog was thick and the night still as Captain Smith returned downriver to the Rim, taking some of our men with him. Very quietly we rowed across the water and attached the cable to one end of the boom. Then, using all our strength, we towed the end of the boom back toward the Rim, stretching it across the river.

THURSDAY, August 14, 1777.

We finished this hard work by dawn and set up the cannon and swivel behind a breastwork. When the light showed in the sky, Captain Smith turned the cannon on the Hope and fired, hitting her several times.

The other British ships were coming to her aid, however, and in spite of forty more Indians' coming down to help us, we realized that in the thick fog the British would be able to land anywhere. If they did, we would be ambushed in the breastwork.

Captain Smith called a hasty conference and decided that it would be best to make our way back upriver to the falls, near the town and mills, where we could make a better defense. There was a small fort there, and a

breastwork near the mills.

We and the white men sent all the women and children off into the woods, where they would be safe from gunfire and flames. Truly, the British force was so big that we didn't know if we could hold the town at all.

We spent the rest of the morning and early afternoon seeing our families off and securing the buildings against attack. I had a little time to talk with John Allan, whom I found standing at the breastwork watching all the preparations.

"Hello, Nicholas," he greeted me. "Are your people safely off?"

"Yes," I replied, "the women and children have taken themselves through the woods and up to the lake." In the distance we could see the last of the white settlers' families moving their belongings.

"I wonder why the British have come so openly to Machias," I asked him. "They would do better to land in secret."

"I'm not surprised," Allan said. He looked down the river where a small party was carrying a cannon toward an advance position on Libby's Point. "Our defense is weak. My guess is that spies have told them that we are stocking goods and ammunition here, but that we have few men to protect the town. They will come in here with their big ships and guns, with their marines, and have an easy job to take us.

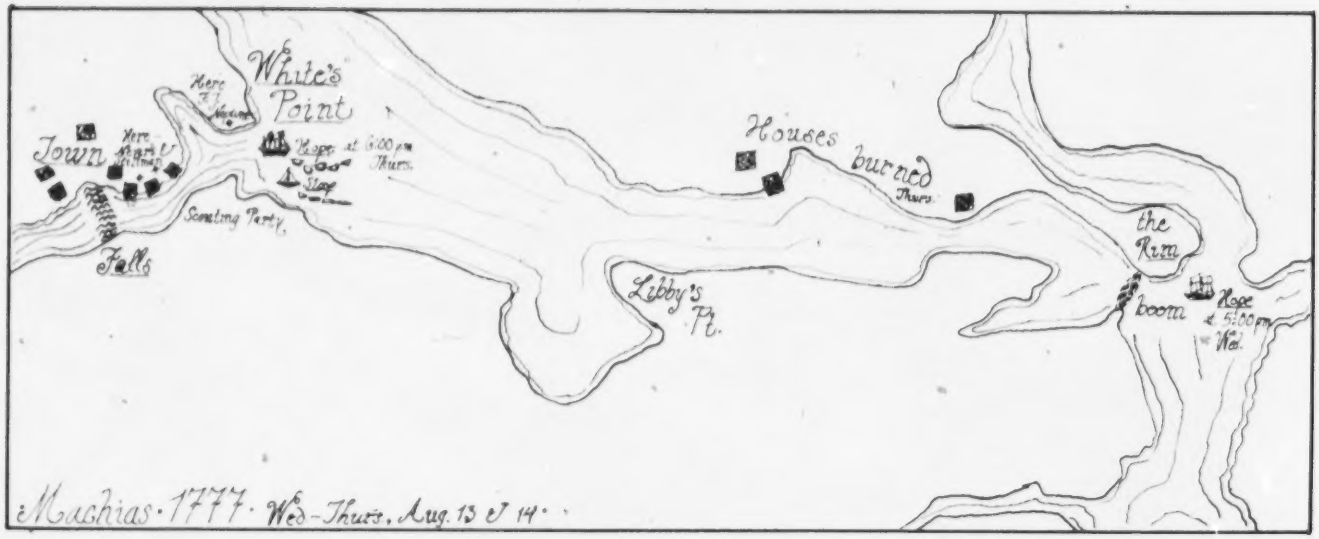
"They probably suspect," he continued after a pause, "that we are gathering supplies here for another attack on Nova Scotia. I wish that we

could do that, and soon."

"Oh," I said hopefully, "after we have taken care of these ships, we will go together back to Nova Scotia, John Allan, to your home and to mine. We will help you to take back your land there, and you will help us keep ours."

Allan smiled thoughtfully. Maybe, like me, he was wondering if that day would ever come when each one of us could hunt and farm at peace in his own country. I wondered too if Pierre Tomah had been right after all - what could we gain by fighting in this battle far from our home?

We turned to look back at the town: at least for now we would have to fight.



Chapter II - Francis Joseph Neptune

Suddenly we heard the party at Libby's Point fire several shots from their cannon. Hearing that, John Allan looked down the river and set his face. "Well," he said, "here they come."

The Hope must have found the boom easy to cut once we had left it. Spies said later that soldiers had come ashore and set fire to our breast-work at the Rim as well as some houses and mills nearby.

I turned to look, and saw the Hope coming up fast on the tide, towing the boats full of marines. With her was a sloop - she must have captured it along the way. The other British ships would have been too big to come into the shallow river. When I turned back, Allan had gone to check the positions of his officers.

I was with Captain Smith and his men on White's Point. About thirty Indians were on a hill near us. Major Stillman and Colonel Nevers

held positions near the mills, and Colonel Allan had sent a small scouting party across the river. In all we had only about 180 men.

The brig Hope and the sloop now came up into the town and anchored near us. Both were towing boats full of marines.

There was a tense silence for about half an hour as the evening drew on. The Hope bristled with guns. We all stayed very still in our positions, watching every movement on the ships and boats.

From where I lay I saw a Passamaquoddy man, Francis Joseph Neptune, son of the chief, go over to Captain Smith.

"Captain," he said, "what are you waiting for? Let's blast them out of here!"

"We'd just be wasting our powder," Smith replied. "I'm sure we'd get the worst of it if the shooting started now. Look at their guns! We'll need all our ammunition."

"How long are they going to sit there, Captain? Let's try a shot at one of the small boats - see what happens."

Smith studied the scene before us. The brig and the sloop and several small boats in tow - what were they waiting for?

"Captain, look!" Francis Joseph pointed across the river, where one of the boats was making for the shore and some houses there. "They're going ashore!"

"All right, man, try your shot."

Then everything happened at once.

Francis Joseph Neptune took aim. It was a hopeless shot, I thought, at least 700 yards across the water. But Neptune was an extraordinary man, a shaman, to whom nothing was impossible. He fired.

The British officer fell dead into the water!

At the same time, war cries broke out all around me, from the white men and Indians alike. At all the positions the shout was raised and our men began firing from both banks of the river.

Chapter III - The Battle Starts

This was too much for the British.

The soldiers on the Hope ran below decks and both ships with boats in tow made down the river, against the tide, as fast as they could. They hadn't fired a single shot.

Allan rushed up to the breastwork, shouting to us and to his men: "Keep your positions! This is probably some trick. They won't give up so easily, believe me."

He and Major Stillman and about thirty men, including me, went across the river and down the other bank. We wanted to check the positions of the British ships and see what they were up to. Were they trying to trick us or did they think that we were trying to trick them?

It was quite dark by this time, but we had to move carefully. As we came up with the brig, anchored off Libby's Point, we walked on an exposed ridge, where the British could easily have seen us not more than a hundred yards away.

Suddenly, we opened fire on them. Judging from the noise and shouts of men, we wounded many. We heard the officers aboard the Hope shouting to those in the smaller boats.

"Get aboard, will you, or you'll be left behind!"

"We can't," came the frightened reply. "We are hit. Help us!"

We could see the boats moving around to behind the brig to get out of range. The men on the ships returned our fire, great volleys of grape-shot hissing among us. But, although we had almost no shelter, we lost only one man killed.

At that point, the tide going out, the Hope went aground near the Rim. Well, she would spend the night there. Our ammunition was used up anyway, and we ourselves were very tired. So we returned to the town until morning.

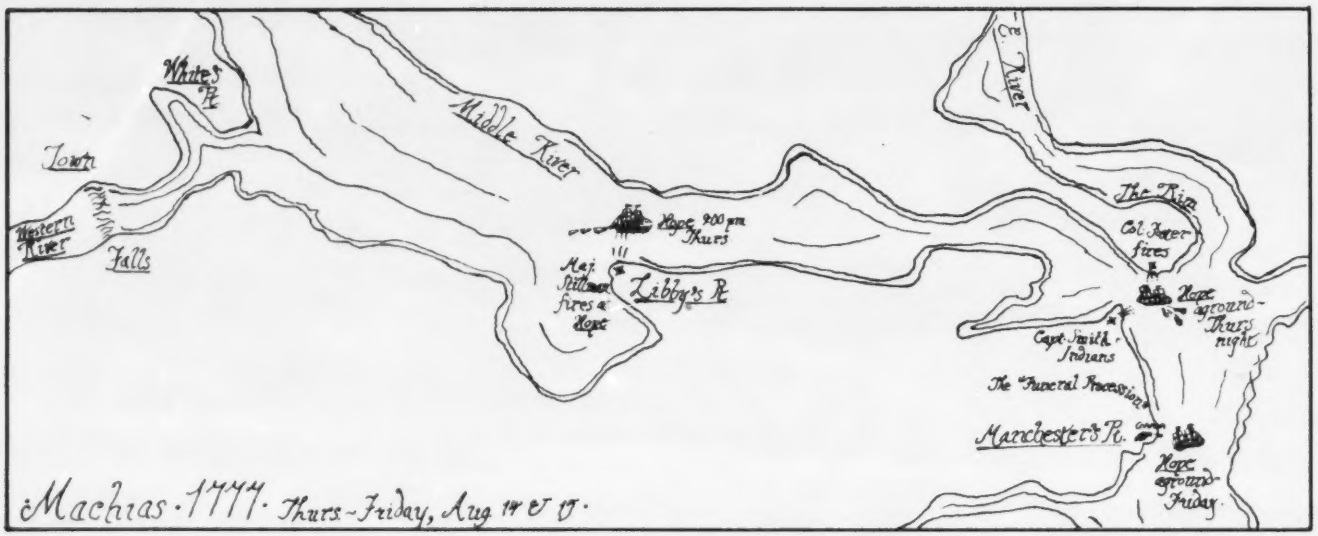
FRIDAY, August 15, 1777.

"We can't breathe easy yet," Allan warned us. "We must make sure that they leave."

At daylight, he sent Colonel Foster and his men downriver on the north bank to attack them. They found the small boats trying to tow the Hope off from where she had run aground. By firing, Foster and his men forced them to give up and seek shelter behind her.

Later in the morning, all of the Indians set out with Captain Smith to attack them from the other side of the river. The boats had to quit towing the brig altogether. But at last, as the tide came in, she got off, releasing the small boats to fend for themselves.

We heard the marines begging to be taken onto the Hope, but an officer screamed back: "I'll blow the first man's brains out who dares to come aboard!" Then, as they passed near Manchester's Point, the brig ran aground again.



For the next several hours our men in small parties covered both banks of the river, shooting at the British marines who were ferrying supplies up to the stranded Hope from the ships anchored in the harbor. More American soldiers came down from the town to help us.

Some of them were bringing a cannon downriver to shoot at the Hope. They had to pass an exposed place near the ship where the British would be sure to fire on them if they saw the cannon. So they made a platform of sticks, laid the cannon upon it, and covered it with a blanket. The British thought that we were carrying one of our dead to be buried, and they respectfully let the "funeral procession" pass.

Well, they soon heard from the body!

We were hitting the Hope with the cannon and she was firing her cannon at us. If she had been floating, the water would have taken up the shock; but she was resting on the bottom, and so she must have suffered a lot of damage. The tide was coming in, however, and she soon floated

45

downriver again, where the other ships could come to her aid.

A heavy rain came on. We couldn't stop the Hope from leaving. With a small breeze, she left the river and with the other ships went to anchor at Round Island.

All but one of the ships, the Blonde Lily, left after the next day. We feared they had gone for reinforcements. Some of us went down to Cross Island to spy on the ship that was left and we surprised some men who had come ashore for water, taking three prisoners.

But the battle for Machias was over. The British never returned.

Chapter IV - After the Battle

About a week after the battle, my brother Francis and I went to see John Allan about returning to the St. John River. We all thought that we should go up to the St. John as soon as possible and drive the British out.

Allan greeted us. "I want to thank all of you, men of every tribe, who have helped us to defend Machias. Your children and your grandchildren will remember what you have done here. You fought with courage and with speed. You did not hesitate to take the most dangerous positions and to press the attack when the time was right."

I thanked him, but then I spoke earnestly to him. "For the sake of the Americans we left our homes on the St. John. There our corn is ripening now. The forests are filled with game, the lakes with thousands of fish, and the skies with flocks of ducks and geese. Now we want to return to reap our harvest. You can bring your men up to the St. John. We will help you in every way, as we have done here. We are ready to die to keep our land on the Beautiful River."

Allan, however, could only reply, "I must wait for word from Massachusetts. I can't move my troops without orders. And we will need more men before we can go." But I knew that he would go if he could.

Next morning an officer arrived with orders from the Massachusetts General Court. Francis and I met secretly with Allan to hear the news:

all soldiers to be disbanded, all supplies to be returned to Massachusetts. General Washington had decided that Allan's force was too small and preparations were too slow. He would think about the plan....

We went back to see Ambrose and the others.

"Well?" they asked.

But we did not have to say anything at all.

The chiefs made a grand appearance, particularly Ambroise St. Aubin; who was dressed in a blue Persian silk coat, embroidered crimson, silk waistcoat four inches deep and scarlet knit breeches, also gold laced Hat with white cockade. N. Goudain, Blue silk trimmed with Vellum, and crimson breeches, Hat Gold laced - The other chiefs were richly dressed in their manner; their blankets were curiously laced with these ribbons....

...and women, elegantly dressed in their fashions, adorned with bracelets, breastplates, and hair boxes of silver, curiously engraved with the figure of sundry animals, flowers, etc....

Aukpoque, June 1777. (From the journal of John Allan)